

France promised at Frankfort by the Allies, demanded new powers. Those limits were doubtless the result of reasonable concessions, and they had been granted even after the battle of Leipsic; but it was now necessary that Napoleon's Minister should show himself ready to make further concessions if he wished to be allowed to negotiate. The Congress was opened on the 5th of February, and on the 7th the Plenipotentiaries of the Allied powers declared themselves categorically. They inserted in the protocol that after the successes which had favored their armies they insisted on France being restored to her old limits, such as they were during the monarchy before the Revolution; and that she should renounce all direct influence beyond her future limits.

This proposition appeared so extraordinary to M. de Caulaincourt that he requested the sitting might be suspended, since the conditions departed too far from his instructions to enable him to give an immediate answer. The Plenipotentiaries of the Allied powers acceded to his request, and the continuation of the sitting was postponed till eight in the evening. When it was resumed the Duke of Vicenza renewed his promise to make the greatest sacrifices for the attainment of peace. He added that the amount of the sacrifices necessarily depended on the amount of the compensations, and that he could not determine on any concession or compensation without being made acquainted with the whole. He wished to have a general plan of the views of the Allies, and he requested that their Plenipotentiaries would explain themselves decidedly respecting the number and description of the sacrifices and compensations to be demanded. It must be acknowledged that the Duke of Vicenza perfectly fulfilled the views of the Emperor in thus protracting and gaining time by subtle subterfuges, for all that he suggested had already been done.

On the day after this sitting some advantages gained by the Allies, who took Chatillon-sur-Marne and Troyes, induced Napoleon to direct Caulaincourt to declare to the Congress that if an armistice were immediately agreed on he was ready to consent to France being restored to her old limits. By